

Message Text

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ACTION ITF-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 IO-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SR-02 ORM-01

EA-06 SCA-01 VO-03 AID-05 INSE-00 /078 W

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O 051310Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9004

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 3426

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMG, BR

SUBJECT: RESETTLEMENT OF VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REFS: A. STATE 097854; B. BRASILIA 3272

1. SUMMARY: APPROACHES TO BRAZILIAN AUTHORITIES, INCLUDING FONMIN, WERE MADE APRIL 29 AND 30 AS OUTLINED REFTEL B. ALL EXPRESSED INTEREST IN THE RESOLUTION OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM AND CONFIRMED BRAZIL'S HIGH REGARD FOR ICEM. THE MATTER OF BRAZILIAN PARTICIPATION IN RESETTLEMENT ACTIVITIES WILL PROBABLY BE REFERRED TO THE PRESIDENT FOR FINAL DECISION.

DESPITE THE ENCOURAGING OFFICIAL REACTION TO THESE APPROACHES, AND THE PROBABILITY THAT A FINAL DECISION WILL BE MADE BY THE PRESIDENT, A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE OF MAY 2 CLAIMING OFFICIAL SOURCES CASTS DOUBT ON BRAZILIAN WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. END SUMMARY.

2. DCM CALLED ITALO ZAPPA, CHIEF OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S DEPARTMENT OF AFRICA, ASIA AND OCEANIA ON APRIL 29 TO MAKE THE POINTS ON VIETNAMESE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT OUTLINED REFTEL A AND TO LEAVE WITH HIM A TALKING POINTS PAPER BASED ON REFTEL. ZAPPA
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EXPRESSED SYMPATHETIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE REFUGEE

SITUATION AND INQUIRED WHETHER THE US WAS ASKING GOVERNMENTS TO DO MORE THAN SIMPLY RESPOND POSITIVELY WHEN APPROACHED BY INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE AGENCIES.

DCM REPLIED THAT USG WAS INTERESTED IN SEEING THAT ALL NECESSARY MEASURES WERE TAKEN TO FIND HOMES FOR THESE REFUGEES, AND THAT THIS WOULD PROBABLY REQUIRE A GREATER EFFORT THAN THE PROGRAMS OF THE INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES. DCM NOTED THE INCLUSION OF ICEM AMONG THE AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE RESETTLEMENT PROBLEM, AND ZAPPA AGREED THAT ICEM'S COOPERATION MIGHT MAKE THE RESETTLEMENT PROJECT ATTRACTIVE TO BRAZIL. DCM IMPRESSED UPON ZAPPA THE URGENCY OF THE PROBLEM, AND ZAPPA UNDERTOOK TO INFORM INTERESTED FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS. ZAPPA PREDICTED THAT THE QUESTION OF ACCEPTING VIETNAMESE REFUGEES WOULD REQUIRE PRESIDENTIAL DECISION. DCM ALSO TOOK ADVANTAGE OF A CALL ON AMB. ESPEDITO RESENDE, CHIEF OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAS, TO DISCUSS THE REFUGEE PROBLEM WITH HIM AND TO DELIVER A COPY OF THE TALKING POINTS PAPER. RESENDE REQUESTED INFORMATION ABOUT THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES INVOLVED IN THE RESETTLEMENT PROBLEM.

3. USAID MISSION DIRECTOR FOLLOWED UP ON APPROACH TO ZAPPA DURING MEETING APRIL 30 WITH ADERBAL COSTA, CHIEF OF THE SUB-SECRETARIAT FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (SUBIN) OF THE PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT FOR PLANNING AND COOPERATION, STRESSING THAT, IN VIEW OF SUBIN'S DEVELOPMENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES, IT MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN RECEIVING, PERHAPS THROUGH ICEM ACTIVITIES, SKILLED VIETNAMESE WHO COULD CONTRIBUTE TO BRAZIL'S GROWTH. COSTA SPOKE HIGHLY OF ICEM AND PROMISED TO DISCUSS THE QUESTION WITH ITALO ZAPPA AND MENTION U.S. INTEREST IN THE REFUGEE PROBLEM TO PLANNING MINISTER REIS VELLOSO. A COPY OF THE TALKING POINTS PAPER WAS LEFT WITH COSTA. (BOTH MINISTER VELLOSO AND ADERBAL COSTA WILL BE IN WASHINGTON DURING THE WEEK OF MAY 4 FOR THE CIAP REVIEW MEETINGS. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR PRESENCE FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM.)

4. THE AMBASSADOR RAISED THE REFUGEE PROBLEM ON APRIL 30 IN THE COURSE OF A CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER SILVEIRA, AND WENT OVER THE KEY POINTS OF REFTEL A WITH HIM. SILVEIRA ACKNOWLEDGED THE GREAT SERIOUSNESS OF THE PROBLEM AND SAID THAT BRAZIL WOULD HAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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TO MAKE A DECISION ON PARTICIPATION IN RELIEF EFFORTS. THE AMBASSADOR CALLED ATTENTION TO THE INCLUSION OF ICEM AMONG THE AGENCIES HANDLING THE REFUGEE QUESTION AND TO BRAZIL'S FRUITFUL RELATIONS WITH ICEM. SILVEIRA CONFIRMED BRAZIL'S, AND HIS OWN, HIGH REGARD FOR ICEM. SILVEIRA SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE URGENCY AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM AND PROMISED TO SEEK A QUICK RESPONSE.

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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9005

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BRASILIA 3426

5. DESPITE THE ENCOURAGING MANNER IN WHICH OUR APPROACHES WERE RECEIVED, A MAY 2 ARTICLE IN THE MAJOR NEWSPAPER "JORNAL DO BRAZIL" CLAIMS THAT BRAZIL WILL NOT ACCEPT VIETNAMESE REFUGEES. INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF STORY FOLLOWS:

QUOTE

IT IS IMPROBABLE THAT THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT WILL ACCEPT THE SUGGESTION OF THE UNITED STATES THAT IT RECEIVE SOUTH VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AS POLITICAL ASYLEES. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY LIMITED ITSELF TO INDICATING, AS A JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS POSITION, THE LACK OF POLITICAL MOTIVATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOLUTION OF A PROBLEM IN RELATION TO WHICH BRAZIL HAD NOT THE LEAST RESPONSIBILITY.

FOREIGN MINISTRY SOURCES INDICATED THAT THE AMERICAN AUTHORITIES HAD NOT MADE A FORMAL REQUEST, PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY ALREADY SENSED THE DISTANCE MAINTAINED BY BRAZIL AND OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND THE PROBLEM OF VIETNAM. THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY INFORMAL APPROACHES (TO BRAZIL) THROUGH THE US MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS.

IN SPITE OF THIS, THE MATTER WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE (BRAZILIAN) NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL FOR AN OPINION. IF THE CURRENT TENDENCY HOLDS, THE

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GOVERNMENT WILL, AT A MAXIMUM, GRANT ASYLUM TO THE TWO VIETNAMESE DIPLOMATS RESIDENT IN BRASILIA, ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE, UP TO NOW, NOT REQUESTED ASYLUM. DESPITE THE FALL OF THE SAIGON REGIME, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY DOES NOT INTEND TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF LACK OF REPRESENTATION BY THE EMBASSY DURING THIS FIRST WEEK, LEAVING IT TO THE DIPLOMATICS OF THE FORMER REGIME THEMSELVES TO DECIDE THEIR DESTINY.

UNQUOTE

6. EMBOFF CONTACTED ITALO ZAPPA AFTERNOON MAY 2 TO INQUIRE WHETHER "JORNAL DO BRAZIL" ARTICLE IN FACT GAVE ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF FOREIGN MINISTRY'S ATTITUDE. ZAPPA EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THE ARTICLE, WHICH HE HAD NOT SEEN, AND STATED THAT THE ARTICLE APPEARED TO HIM TO BE UNAUTHORIZED. HE SAID THAT THE EMBASSY'S APPROACH HAD BEEN HANDLED IN A CONFIDENTIAL MANNER WITHIN THE MINISTRY AND THAT HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY APPROACH HAVING BEEN MADE VIA THE US MISSION TO THE UN. HE STATED THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN MADE ON THE REFUGEE QUESTION AND THAT HE BELIEVED HE COULD STATE WITH ASSURANCE THAT THE NEWS ARTICLE DID NOT REPRESENT A DEFINITIVE FOREIGN MINISTRY POSITION. IN A LATER CONVERSATION, MINISTER ZAPPA SAID HE HAD LOCATED THE CORRESPONDENT WHO FILED THE STORY, AND THAT THE CORRESPONDENT STATED TO HIM THAT THE STORY WAS BASED, IN PART, ON SPECULATION AND HAD BEEN CUT BY THE NEWSPAPER'S COPY DESK TO APPEAR MORE DEFINITIVE THAN THE STORY ACTUALLY FILED.

7. AS A RESULT OF THE STORY IN "JORNAL DO BRAZIL," EMBASSY RECEIVED PERSISTENT INQUIRIES MAY 2 FROM REUTERS CONCERNING A POSSIBLE EMBASSY APPROACH TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ON THE REFUGEE PROBLEM. AFTER COORDINATION WITH ZAPPA, THE EMBASSY INFORMED REUTERS THAT SUCH AN APPROACH HAD BEEN MADE, BUT THAT NO REPLY HAD AS YET BEEN RECEIVED.

8. DESPITE ZAPPA'S DEMURRER, WE CONCLUDE THAT "JORNAL DO BRAZIL" STORY DOES REPRESENT SOME AREAS OF OFFICIAL OPINION WITHIN THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT AND CASTS DOUBT

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ON THE POSSIBILITY OF A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO OUR APPROACHES.

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